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(54) Cleansing/skin-care product dispenser

(57) A cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser comprises a flexible plastics wall (11) defining a chamber (12) for receiving the product (13). Slits (15) are provided in the wall (11). The parts of the wall defining the slits are abutted when the dispenser is not actively dispensing product (13), the slits (15) being opened via flexing the wall (11) in order to dispense the product. The dispenser further comprises means (14) for allowing the equalisation of air pressure within and outside the dispenser in order that the product (13) may be easily dispensed from the dispenser.

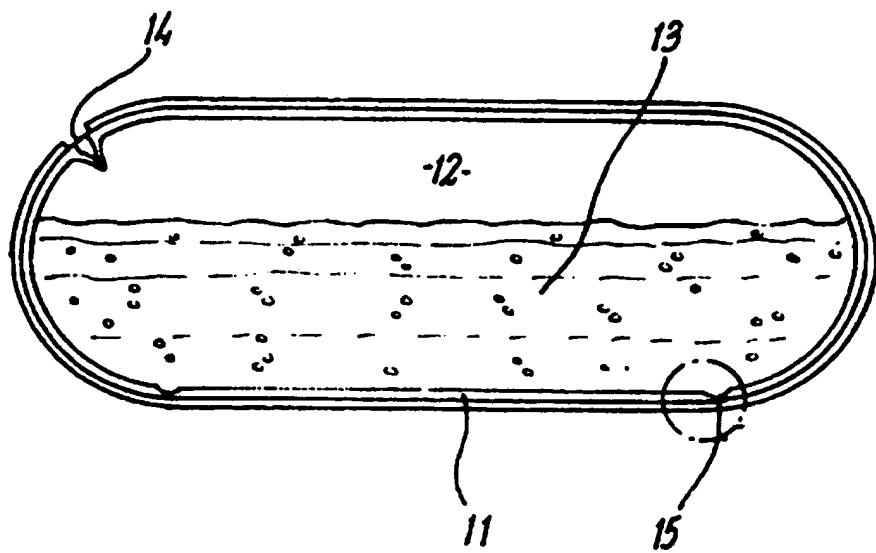


FIG. 3

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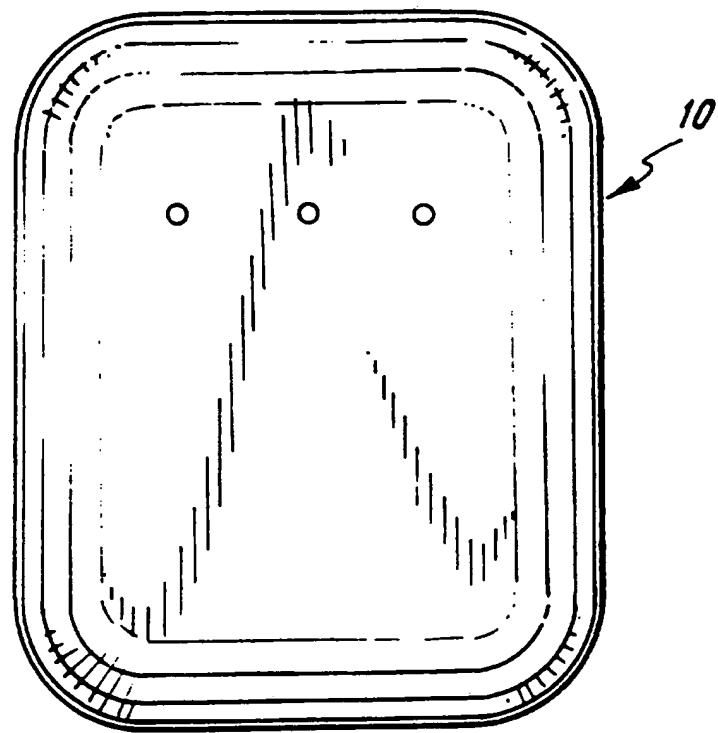
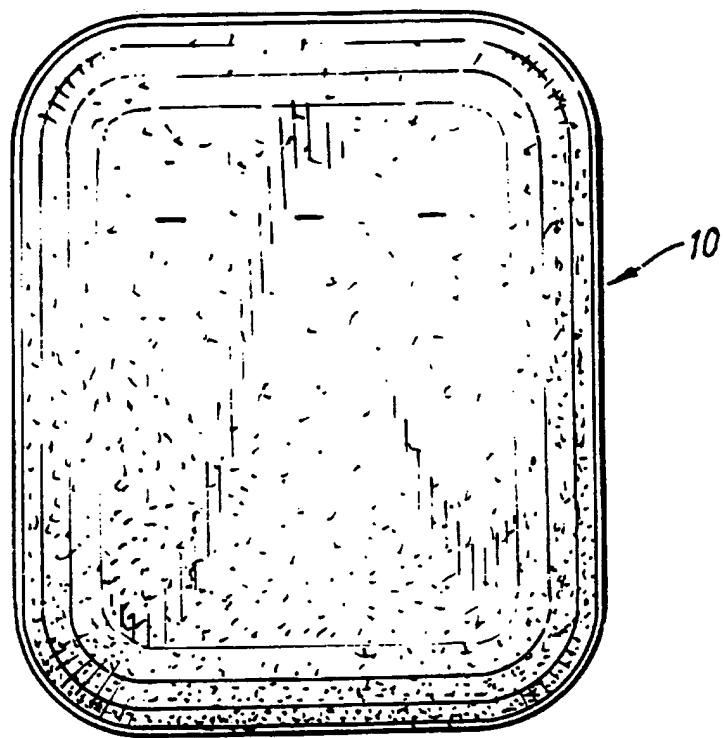


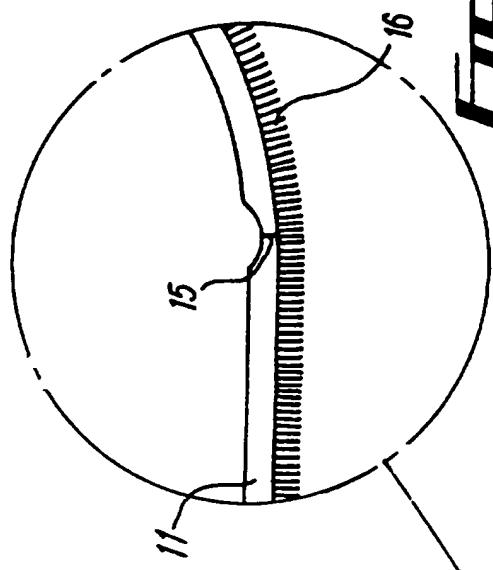
FIG. 1

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ГБ.2

FIG. 4



$3/3$

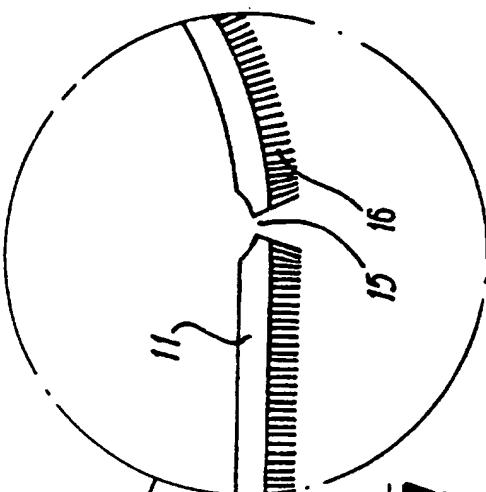
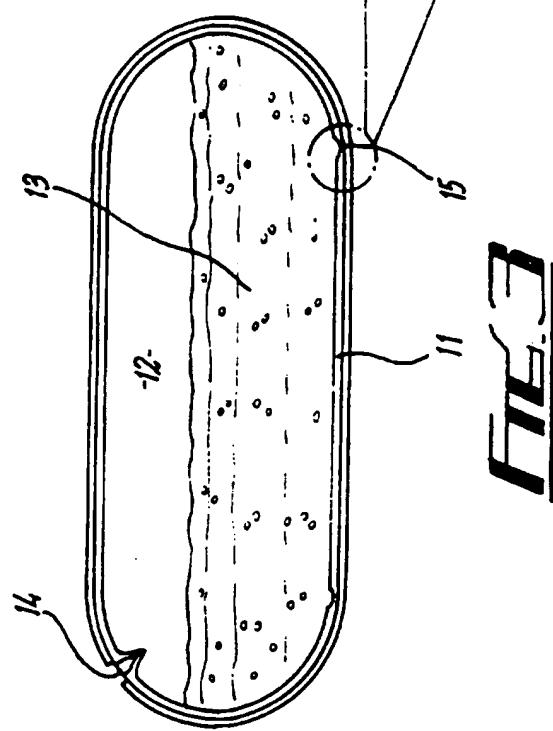


FIG. 5



CLEANSING/SKIN-CARE PRODUCT DISPENSER

The present invention relates to a dispenser of cleansing products and/or skin-care products. The term "cleansing product" used herein relates to all cleansing products such as soaps, detergents or shower gels. The term "skin-care product" relates to all conventional skin-care products such as moisturisers. The dispenser has particular, but not exclusive, application in the dispensing of liquid and/or gel products.

Soaps for washing have been supplied in a bar form for many years. These soap bars are prone to mushing and cracking. The bars also leave undesirable soap deposits on the wash basin or soap dish. The soap bar is difficult to hold while bathing in that the wet surface of the soap is slippery. As a further point soap bars are prone to loss of perfume when exposed to air. They can also have a drying effect on the skin.

In view of these problems soap is often sold in a liquid form which is dispensed from pump operated dispensers, the pump being located in the dispenser cap. Shower gels are conventionally sold in flexible bottles, the gels being dispensed by squeezing the bottle causing the gel to exit via a nozzle in the bottle cap. These dispensers are designed to release liquid soap or gels into a hand prior to application to the skin. These dispensers are not designed to be rubbed

on the skin, as with a soap bar, in order to dispense the soap or gel onto the body.

According to the present invention there is provided a cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser comprising a wall defining a chamber for receiving the cleansing and/or skin-care product, wherein at least one slit is provided in the wall for dispensing the product, the parts of the wall defining the slit being abutted when the dispenser is not being used to actively dispense the product and the said parts of the wall being separable by flexing the wall in order that the product may be actively dispensed via the slit and wherein the dispenser further comprises means for allowing the equalisation of air pressure within and outside the dispenser in order that the product may be easily dispensed from the dispenser.

Thus the invention provides a fully enclosed container which dispenses cleansing products and/or skin-care products through outlets on the application of a small force to the dispenser wall. The dispensing of the product will cease when the applied force is removed. The applied force may be achieved by rubbing the dispenser over the body in a similar manner to a soap bar.

The parts of the wall defining the slit are ideally of reduced thickness compared to the remainder of the wall. This makes the slit more responsive to pressure applied to the

wall.

The means for allowing the equalisation of air pressure within and outside the dispenser preferably comprises at least one valve. Ideally the valve is a one-way valve allowing air into the chamber, but not allowing any product to exit the chamber.

At least a part of the outer surface of the dispenser wall may be coated with an absorbent material, such as a fabric or a plurality of fibres. This enhances the cleansing action and sensation by retaining a finite amount of product from any previous applications, promoting a lathering action, augmenting the contact area during rubbing and stimulating tactile sensations. The absorbent material may be impregnated with at least one cleansing and/or moisturising product. The coating may be applied by a flocking process in which a plurality of fibres are flocked onto adhesive located on the outer surface of the dispenser wall. The use of such a coating would usually produce a lathering action within 3 seconds.

The dispenser may be refilled by injection through one of the slots or the means for pressure equalisation. The dispenser may be shaped and/or textured so as to facilitate easy gripping by a hand. The apparent density of the filled dispenser is ideally less than 1.0, thus allowing the dispenser to float in water.

The dispenser may be made from any suitable material such as plastics. Thermoplastics such as thermoplastic polyurethane are ideal materials.

In order that the present invention may be more readily understood a specific embodiment thereof will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig.1 is a plan view of one dispenser in accordance with the present invention;

Fig.2 is an underplan view of the dispenser of Fig.1;

Fig.3 is a longitudinal cross-sectional view through the dispenser of Figs. 1 and 2;

Fig.4 is an exploded view of the slit arrangement shown in Fig.3 when the slit is closed; and

Fig.5 is an exploded view of the slit arrangement shown in Fig.3 when the slit is open.

Referring to the drawings a dispenser 10 of cleansing compositions and/or skin-care products comprises a soap-bar shaped body made from a flexible plastics wall 11. The wall 11 defines a chamber 12 in which is located the cleansing composition and/or skin-care product. Three one-way valves

14 are located in the top of the dispenser. These valves 14 allow air to enter the dispenser, but do not allow the material contained in the chamber 12 to exit. Three slits 15 are provided in the base of the dispenser. The parts of the wall of the dispenser located adjacent the slit 15 are of reduced thickness as can be seen in Fig.4.

A plurality of fibres 16 are adhered to the underside of the bar. These fibres 16 retain a measure of the material dispensed from the chamber 12 so that rubbing the device over a skin surface can produce a lathering action within, say three seconds.

When not in use the walls 11 of the dispenser are not compressed and the parts of the dispenser wall 11 defining the slits 15 abut such that substantially none of the material contained within the chamber can exit the bar (see Fig.4).

When in use the dispenser is rubbed along the surface of the skin, thus compressing the walls 11 of the dispenser and prising apart the parts of the wall defining the slit 15 (see Fig.5). Now the material 13 contained in the chamber 12 can escape between the parts of the wall which define the slit 15 as those parts no longer abut. The one way valve 14 allows air to enter the chamber thus allowing for the equalisation of air pressure within and outside the dispenser.

It is to be understood that the above described

embodiment of the invention has been described by way of example only. Many modifications and variations are possible. For example any number of valves or slits may be provided.

CLAIMS

1. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser comprising a wall defining a chamber for receiving the cleansing and/or skin-care product, wherein at least one slit is provided in the wall for dispensing the product, the parts of the wall defining the slit being abutted when the dispenser is not being used to actively dispense the product and the said parts of the wall being separable by flexing the wall in order that the product may be actively dispensed for allowing the equalisation of air pressure within and outside the dispenser in order that the product may be easily dispensed from the dispenser.
2. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser as claimed in claim 1, wherein the parts of wall defining the slit or slits are of reduced thickness compared to the remainder of the wall.
3. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the means for allowing the equalisation of air pressure within and outside the dispenser comprises at least one valve.
4. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser as claimed in claim 3, wherein the said valve is a one-way valve allowing air into the chamber, but not allowing the product to exit the chamber.

5. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein at least a part of the outer surface of the dispenser wall is coated with an absorbent material.

6. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product dispenser as claimed in claim 5, wherein the absorbent material comprises a fabric or a plurality of fibres.

7. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product as claimed in claim 5 or claim 6, wherein the absorbent material is impregnated with at least one cleansing and/or moisturising product.

8. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the apparent density of the filled dispenser is less than 1.0 such that the dispenser floats in water.

9. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the dispenser wall is made from plastics.

10. A cleansing product and/or skin-care product substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.



Application No: GB 9602829.5
Claims searched: 1-10

Examiner: William Thomson
Date of search: 18 April 1996

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): A4F (FQP, F35A8)
B8D (DCD, DCF5, DCF8, DCG, DCW9, DCW10, DSS)
B8T (TWG)

Int Cl (Ed.6): A47K 7/03
B65D 1/32, 1/40, 25/00, 25/34, 25/40, 25/42, 35/02, 35/08, 35/24,
35/36, 37/00, 51/00, 83/00

Other:

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X	GB2155429A (BAR-PAK) Whole document relevant	1, 9
X	WO 84/01143A1 (ETCHEBARNE) See claim 1, page 7 and Figure 1	1, 9

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.